Burmese King thereupon went down with an army which succeeded in carrying off King, Clergy and Scriptures from the unfortunate city of Thaton. King Manuha of Thaton languished on a throne seat of bare stone in Pagan, but the religion thrived and blossomed into the grandeur of the thousand pagodas and temples of Pagan, so that even today Burmans can see the white majesty of the Ananda and rejoice in the way their kings received and enshrined their faith. With king and religion transplanted, Thaton fell into a decline, and soon lost her trade also, for the sea coast extended and left Thaton a dry inland town. However, it never lost its reputation as the old seat of religion; its rich geographical features also remained—a soil which can grow rice, fruits and plantations of other crops in abundance; its easy access to the big towns of Moulmein and Rangoon; the Martaban Hills which were ranged behind the town, and over which waterfalls tumbled down to cross the red laterite roads as streams of clear water.

Most pensioners, by the time they retired, had already established some form of livelihood other than the drawing of their pension. My father owned two rubber plantations just outside Thaton, each about 110 acres. Burma is not one of the chief rubber producing areas of the world, but the country round Tenasserim is suitable for rubber-growing and produced the greater part of what was, in 1939, a total of over 22,000,000 lbs. Thaton district contained about 15,628 acres of rubber, between big planters and many small plantations like ours.

My parents started our estates in the form of clearings which they planted with the help of my grandfather in about 1910, before my father became a myook, and were in time to reap the riches of the great boom in the post-war years, when they were selling rubber at Rs. 2/- per lb. and my father bought a motor boat and my mother many diamonds. As a Government servant my father was not allowed to work at any trade, so he handed over the possession of the estates to my mother's sister, our Kyi-Kyi Lon, who all her spinster life has devoted herself to my mother and to us. She worked the estates for us and, in the awful years of the slump that followed, we quite forgot indeed that we owned any such things as rubber plantations, for the only connection which my father ever had with them, the receipt of money from Kyi-Kyi, disappeared completely. In 1935, however, when my father retired, the market for rubber had just begun to stir into being, the Burma Rubber Committee allowed planters like us an annual quota of about 20,000 lbs or two-thirds of our production, which we hoped to sell at roughly as. 7 per lb, and my father was free to work them again. He had no technical knowledge and the minimum amount of business acumen, and I never ceased to wonder how money could come to us in this haphazard way. We

kept a manager and his family in the bungalow of each plantation, and a staff of eight or nine tappers. Once a week we drove out there on a picnic inspection; my father and mother gazed with pride on the rows of neat trees, walked right round to see that clearings were maintained and that the trees looked right, peered into the cups of rich white latex, administered rebukes and instructions and inspected the books, visited the smoking house and saw the brown smoked sheets with GK stamped on them, after the traditional Burmese way of married business—G for Gyi, my mother, and K for Kaing, my father—and then we all returned home. Chinese traders came to the house and while chewing betel they talked about quantities and prices of the stock we had. Then the stacked sheets came from the plantation in the two bullock carts which we kept there, and the traders came and took them away and paid us in cash. Business was something so foreign to what we had always seen our parents doing, and this all seemed so simple, that we always felt they were surely being cheated.

Some of the other pensioners did not believe in dabbling with commodities that depended on a world market. Even the way in which we grew rubber went too much into the world of specialized commerce which might have pitfalls for a retired civil servant. A friend of my father's grew large gardens of *da-nyin*, a tree of the laburnum species. The fruit of this tree rivals the durian for its nauseating effect on foreign sensibilities. It does not exude a smell as the durian does, until you eat it, but after eating it the smell comes out in breath, sweat and all other excretions. But it is one of our favourite foods. It is a small flat circular fruit of a hard and smooth consistency, enclosed in a shell which prises open in neat halves like an oyster shell. The texture and taste are delicious. We boil or bake it as a vegetable for fish sauce, we salt it in big jars as a pickle, we beat it and make it swim in coconut milk and eat it as a sweet, we bury it and make it sprout into a more pungent form called *da-nyin wet*. The main point is that it is eaten in vast quantities. It also contains substances which are good for diabetics, and families buy it literally in hundreds. No world depression interferes with the demand for *da-nyin thi*, and though the sale price is low, overhead charges are almost nil.

Other families in Thaton got their extra income from paddy-land. Although the rice for which Burma is so famous today did not enter world markets till the latter half of the last century, the possession of *lè*, fields, which is synonymous with paddy-fields, is a well established form of wealth. Our part of Burma is particularly rich in fields. Nearly all the 3,500,000 tons of rice which is exported annually from Burma comes from Lower Burma, where Tenasserim Division ranks among the

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

housewife or her daughter stepping on and off the bar, so as to raise the pestle and let it fall on the rice in the mortar. The rice is very thoroughly cleaned in this way, and Burmans prefer it to that which has passed between the mill-stones of the European factory. The Derbyshire, or composition stones, do their work only too thoroughly, and remove so much of the pellicle as to take away all the flavour, besides that the great heat caused by the steady grinding tends to the same result. Consequently the pleasant refrain of the girls chanting at their work may be heard all over the village after dark, and when a large quantity has to be prepared for some offering to the Sacred Order on a feast-day, the chanted chorus rises and falls round about the homestead often till long past "midnight cock-crow," till the rising of the "red star" warns them to retire to rest, tired, but happy, for such a good work earns great merit. A sesamum oil-press is also frequently found in at least one house in every village. This is equally simple in its construction. It consists of a deep wooden trough, in which the seeds are pressed by a heavy upright timber fixed in a frame. The weight is increased by a long lever, on the end of which a man sits and guides a bullock which goes round in a circle, thus crushing and turning the seed at the same time.

The carts are very strongly built, and are remarkable for the way in which the floor curves upwards towards the back in the same way as the boats do. In Upper Burma formerly the wheels were mostly composed of one solid, roughly-rounded slab of wood, or in some cases of two semicircular slabs joined together, and these are still found, but more and more rarely, in out-of-the-way places in the upper province, though wheels constructed in European fashion with spokes are mostly in use, and Government now prescribes a three-inch tyre on all district roads. Occasionally in the old days to save trouble the carter started with a square wheel, and trusted to time to round it for him. Padauk (*Pterocarpus indicus*) is the wood most valued for this purpose, but it is too expensive for most people. The wheels are never greased, and make hideous shrieking noises as they revolve. This serves to keep away tigers and wild

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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obtained. Red and yellow are, however, always the predominating colours. 531 285 322

The thi'si is turned to a variety of other uses besides the manufacture of lacquer-work; applied to wood, or to marble and clay images, it enables them readily to take on gilding. It is used as a waterproof varnish to all the umbrellas in the country, and makes them as impervious to rain as if they were made of wood, while it protects the palm-leaf against the rays of the sun, which otherwise would burn it as brittle as an egg-shell. All the racing and war-boats in Burma are painted with it, and the best caulking in the world could not make them more water-tight. Finally, boiled down thick it furnishes the material for delineating the square heavy characters of the sacred kammawa-sa, the ritual for the admission of brethren to the sacred order. 531 249

The oil is usually put in the sun for a short time before being used, and it is at first of a light brown colour, soon darkening into a brilliant black. It seems to be of a particularly mordant character, and raises huge blisters on the hands of some people, leaving marks of the ashy-white colour suggestive of leprosy. Hence strangers suspected of being afflicted with the terrible malady always declare they are thi'si workers; and many people avoid these latter, in case they might find they had been holding communication with an outcast. A lotion composed of fine teak-wood saw-dust, mixed with a little water, is used as a cure for blains. Many of the workmen periodically swallow small doses of the wood-oil, under the impression that it acts as a preventive. The capriciousness with which the varnish acts, leaving some men quite unharmed and punishing others severely, has given rise to a proverb in Nyaung-u:— [753] [757]

Thi'si is a witness
To a burgher's fitness;
If bad, he's marked an outcast;
If good, not long can doubt last.

matters, and cases occurred in which he unwittingly signed away title to his property, thinking he was only signing 'loan papers.' In some cases, Burmese cultivators, encouraged by moneylenders, borrowed sums greater than actually required for crop financing and used the excess for sponsorship of ceremonial activities, dramatic presentations, purchasing imported goods never before needed, and so on. 426

The result of this was the tremendous growth of rural indebtedness and much foreclosure by creditors holding mortgages on the land. By the 1930's, about half the cultivated land of Lower Burma was owned by landlords, largely absentee. The once independent Burmese land holder was converted into a rural tenant, or, in many instances, a landless agricultural laborer. Many tenant farmers, dependent upon rent-racking landlords, worked from harvest to harvest with little to show for their efforts beyond perhaps enough of the crop, after payment of rent, hired help, and debts, to feed their families through the planting and growing seasons. Large numbers left agriculture for other pursuits, such as petty clerical jobs in the towns and itinerant trading in imported goods. In Tadagale, for example, in 1949-50 it was possible to record cases of cultivators in such difficult straits that after paying their help and taxes, they did not have enough paddy left for the family granary to last until the next harvest, and were thus in the position of having to purchase in the market, at inflated prices, the very commodity they produced. 178 426 463

2. The Shift in Tadagale. The economic shift within the village may be summarized in terms of modes of employment, resources, imports and exports. 178

a. Employment. Rice agriculture has been decreasing as the land has passed, over time, into the hands of absentee landlords and independent owner-cultivators have become fewer. The tenant farmers are likewise small in numbers. [243] [427]

The manufacture of clothing has also diminished. Formerly, cotton was spun and woven in the village. Now, clothing is very largely obtained by purchase of imported piece goods in Rangoon and having it finished by city tailors and seamstresses. [294]

Oil pressing as an occupation has disappeared. The one remaining presser of oil seeds recently abandoned this work because of the difficulty and high cost of obtaining sesamum seeds from central Burma. [249]

In a few occupations there seems to have been no notable change. These are carpentry and work in bamboo and thatch, which keep a few people occupied; itinerant selling of prepared foods; shopkeeping; and medical practice (indigenous medicine). 178 463

Several occupations are new or increasing in the village. Agricultural wage labor has increased as more people have been unable to secure a living as tenant farmers and have gone to work for others in and near the village. Vegetable gardening, always important because of the nearby Rangoon markets, has become a leading occupation, especially since the beginning of the insurrections in 1948 which reduced the supply of fresh vegetables from the north.

As motor transport has replaced animal transport over the years, the men of Tadagale have been increasingly employed in operating buses. Related to this is the establishment of a repair shop by a motor mechanic to service the buses owned by villagers.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

104. OUTLOOK OVER MIXED FORMS OF CULTIVATION.

the vagaries of the rivers. A good season is one in which a large proportion of the fields have water enough for an early start and in which the rainfall is steady, not leaving the surface to dry up by a long break in the rain nor deluging the soil at other times. All the alluvial land of favourable elevation and quality is laid out in level rice-fields. Where the rainfall is ample—fifty inches and upwards—portions of the diluvial land with tenacious soil can be utilised in the same way by merely saving the surface-water. In regions of lighter rainfall, in a few favoured localities, such land is brought under rice by help of irrigation and if need be by terracing as well. The rice-fields are bordered by low turfy balks (*kazin*) about a cubit high, to keep in the water. These regular rice-lands form less than one-tenth of the gross area of the country. The rest is mainly irreclaimable, chiefly mountain, waste. The waste areas of the alluvial plains (*kwin*) are flooded from three to ten feet deep in the rains. They are clothed with elephant-grass (*kaing*) studded, through with silk-cotton trees and a few other species. The lowest levels in the *kwin* form shallow lagoons (*in*, No. 103) which dry up in the hot season. Dry-season crops—sugar-cane (which is also grown on the wet system), maize, lentils, and vegetables for a limited market—are obtained in the *kaing*.

105. HILL-PEOPLE MAKING THEIR CULTIVATION CLEARING (p. 149).

Burma has become the rice-mart of the world. Since the development of this trade the price of the staple export has more than quadrupled, producing in the lower country a prosperity which has no parallel in respect of its equal diffusion. It is believed that this development of the wealth of Pegu has been favoured by the upheaval

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
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Hnam is grown as

183. PE AND TAN PALMS.

a secondary crop in the hills, a dry-weather crop in the *kwin*, and a full crop in the dry zone. The care of the *tári* palm, the planting and milling of sugar-cane, the care of orchards and the raising of vegetables are occupations of a special kind. The *tan* and *pe* palms, which yield the palm-wine or juice, propagate naturally. The *tan* grows about a foot a year, and attains a height of eighty to a hundred feet (No. 167). It fruits at fifteen to twenty years. *Tan* palms are common on the temple-lands and other well-drained and uncultivated clearings. The curved flower-stalks of the *tan* are cut through, and to their stumps earthen pots are slung to receive the juice that exudes. A gallon or more is collected from a tree in twenty-four hours. Palm-juice is also obtained from the *pe*, the dried leaves of which are used for writing on. The tree takes about fifty years to mature; then it flowers for the first time, fruits and dies; its gigantic head of bloom is cut off at the base and the juice flows for some months. The *dani* palm is tapped in the same way as the *tan*. Fresh juice of all three palms is sweet, and before fermentation sets in it may be drunk even by the *yahán*. When boiled fresh, the juice yields a sugar (*tanmyét*). The collecting pots are boiled out daily, by which the yeast that forms is destroyed. This boiling is omitted when the liquor is intended for a beverage. In that case a decoction of the nut of *pangá* or other astringent is added, which helps to arrest fermentation at the vinous stage. Otherwise, acid fermentation is complete within twenty-four hours. Fer-

[256]

184. CLEANING RICE WHOLESALE [illegible]

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

185. CANE-CRUSHING MILL.

mented *tan-ye* (*tári*, palm-wine) has the alcoholic strength of small beer. Most of the juice is boiled down for the sake of the sugar. Drinkers of *tári* are few among the Burmans. Women are universally abstainers. The Burmans do not brew or distil liquor of any kind, but in some places they make a drink called *sè-ye* by adding to *tari* an infusion of herbs of weak narcotic properties."

245 273 [249]

In parts of the *kwin*, too heavily flooded for rice-cultivation, certain varieties of sugar-cane (*kyan*) thrive. These have been introduced from India within the last fifty years and have proved a means of extending cultivation. On dry soil, a thin variety of sugar-cane with a dark rind is cultivated, principally by Shan settlers. Sugar-cane is cut in November; cane tops are kept standing in water till the soil has been turned and they can be put out for the next crop. A great deal of sugar-cane is eaten like fruit. Cane-juice is pressed out in wooden mills between rollers accurately turned and geared by cogs or spiral teeth (No. 187). In an adjacent shed is an earthen furnace for boiling the juice, which is on a much larger scale than the palm-juice boiling. Earthen pots have been superseded by cast-iron cauldrons, at first of Shan manufacture, but now imported from Europe. The crushed stalks of the cane furnish a large part of the fuel. When the syrup has thickened it is poured into flat moulds to solidify. The product is hard and of a light brown colour (*kyan'agyi*). It is eaten plain and is used for baking sweetmeats; none of it goes to refineries. Almost the whole

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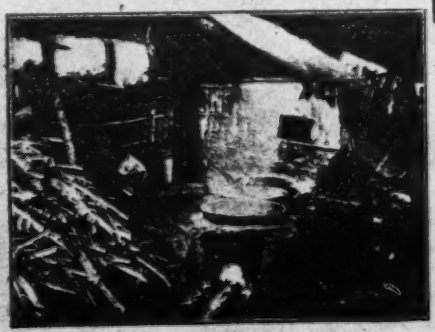
[177]



186. BOILING DOWN THE CANE-JUICE.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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Almost the whole

187. TURNING ROLLERS FOR THE CANE-MILL.

out-turn is bought up by Chinese settlers for distilling spirits (p. 156).

Of the edible wild fruits of Burma, after the wild mango the chief is *kanasó*. There are many less succulent kinds of wild fruit, for the most part acid and astringent. The cultivated fruit-trees need to be protected from cattle till high above the ground. But so rapid is the growth that in two to five years the trees are established. Tamarind, mango and jack are the commonest fruit trees and need little care; they are wayside trees in the villages. Clumps are planted in the *kyaung* enclosures and at camping-places (*sakán*) for their shade. In the dry zone the tamarind attains the proportions of our oak (No. 309), as does the mango in the moist regions (No. 304). A congener of the mango, the *mayán*, is also planted. The jack-tree attains moderate size, but, although evergreen, its shade is light. The cocoanut palm (*ôn*) has to be artificially germinated by watering the nut for several weeks before planting, for it rots if left to soak. It needs fencing for some years and does not bear for ten to fifteen, which is a comparatively long time for labour to await its return in the tropics. Burma grows only a small proportion of the cocoanuts she requires; the rest are imported from India and the Nicobar Islands. Dry cocoanuts cost one-half to one anna, and green nuts as much as two annas each. The water of the green nut is a refreshing beverage, frequently offered to the *yahán* and in hospitality to strangers. The betel-palm (*kun*, areca) is more extensively propagated. Limes, citron and pumelo, jujube and guava, cashew and bael are planted about

188. COLLECTING JACK-FRUIT.

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

290. PAREIKAYA DEALER.

weather sale-booths (*taungzè*), for trade with the hill-people, at central points as far from the towns as canoes can navigate the stream. They sell dried fish and *ngapi*, salt, oil, pease, sugar, spices and tobacco, pottery and crockery, plain and coloured yarns, needles, thread, cloth of every sort, elastic belts, under-vests, matches, tapers and soap, kerosene oil, pencils, pens, ink and paper, playing-cards, beads, spectacles, mirrors and fancy articles from Europe, besides biscuits, sardines, and condensed milk. All these wares are sold in the larger villages as well. Sale-booths are set up at every festival, chiefly for refreshments. But there is nothing corresponding to the fairs of India and the West.

Both men and women smoke tobacco. Children begin at four or five (No. 21). The Burman cheroot (*seleik*) is a roll five to eight inches long and an inch thick, consisting of chopped tobacco-leaf and the pith of the tobacco stem, with a wrapper made of the inner skin of the spathe of the betel palm, or the spathe of maize, or else the leaves of *pauk*, *thanát* or *bambavè*, which are smoothed on a hot stone. The Burman exquisite toys with this cheroot much as the Japanese does with the fan. The fan is not affected by men or women in Burma. Good cheroots are also rolled of plain tobacco-leaf, in the Indian way; they are very strong. Unlike the Shans, Karéns and Chinese, with their pipes, and the natives of India with their hookah, the Burman sticks to the cheroot. Tobacco is grown on the silt banks left dry by the rivers (Nos. 191, 264); but the bulk is imported from the South of India. A delicate "birds-eye" tobacco is prepared by the Karéns and Shans on the North-East; it is shredded green, and does not keep well. At intervals on the main lines of

291. BAZAR SCENE, BURMA PROPER.